Christianity and Crisis

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Joining America

I N a recent number of The New Republic Dr. Matthiessen reviews the report of the Harvard Committee on "General Education in a Free Society." He has a pretty good time doing it, as indeed one would guess from the title, "Harvard wants to join America." Among other things he rejoices that the committee has waked up to the justice of the comment of a Massachusetts Commissioner of Education that "Harvard is a place where everyone down to the lowest paid research assistant has views about international relations, but nobody knows what's happening in Central Square."

A university naturally tends to be a "fenced-in oasis." Faculty people (with many great and distinguished exceptions) are absorbed in their own tasks which often have little or no direct contact with everyday life. Then too it is immensely easier to be concerned with such matters as international affairs than with local politics. The people with whom you will be thrown are much more interesting. They may not be actually more intelligent; but they seem so. Furthermore there is little you can really do beyond reading and talking about Bulgaria or Outer Mongolia or the Argentine. There is plenty of interest and little work. On the other hand Central Square means the run-of-the-mill people; committees whose members must visit slums, arguing obvious reforms with the recalcitrant and selfish, taking stands which offend the best people, finding one's self involved in all sorts of trouble. And yet as everyone knowns, if he stops to think of it, in a democracy which is honestly attempting to deserve the name, it is in Central Square that the work has to begin. The importance of leadership can hardly be over-emphasized, but until leadership reaches Central Square it is ineffective. It is there that public sentiment is formed. It is there that the measurers which carry the state or nation forward are tested. It is there that the common people exercise that often strangely accurate judgment which confirms one's faith in democracy.

If the United Nations Charter is to have the full support of America, the people in and around Central Square must repudiate the Gerald Smiths and Hearsts and Chicago Tribunes. They must have trust that Russia and Britain do intend to honor their pledges and they must be willing that America should sacrifice some of its so-called sovereignty. They must believe in One World and be glad to be a part of it. If management and labor are to work together during these coming crucial years, if the problems which Congress is now tackling are to be solved with any reasonable success it can be done only if Central Square backs the policies of the leaders. If the Negro "problem" is to move toward solution, the Negro in Central Square must be treated fairly. If he is "Jim Crowed" on streets cars, and in housing and in employment, F.E.P.C. can not get very far. Always it is Central Square to which we return.

Now what about the Churches? How do they enter the picture? Two facts are very obvious. The first is that they tend, just as do the universities, to be "fenced-in oases." It is much easier to belong to classes studying missionary work in China than it is to study the matter of delinquency in and around Central Square and to do something about it. It is far more interesting for most Protestants to discuss the question of the Russian Church and the Soviet government, than to work over the question of religion and the public schools-which is, after all, Central Square's immediate concern. It is much easier to condemn Vatican policies in Southern Europe or Latin America, than to cooperate with Roman Catholics on the ever-recurring delinquency problem. Institutions themselves often block clear vision of the very purpose for which they were created. In Church life every one knows the complacency, the sub-Christian indifference of Christian congregations to the evils of the industrial and economic order. They don't mind (these good Christian people) hearing about the brotherhood of man. They like Utopian pictures of the Kingdom of God. They like to be heated with anger at German and Japanese cruelty; but apply these principles at Central Square and see what happens!

On the other hand for all the delinquencies of the churches, for all the crass indifference of multi-

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tudes of Christian people to their responsibilities towards the social order, we cannot, we dare not, overlook the fact, that to the churches in America has been entrusted by God more than to any other group of people, the safeguarding and making articulate the conscience of the American people. Dr. Bates in his great book on Religious Liberty warns us not to claim too much for Christianity, to keep to the facts. But that is keeping to the facts, is it The Christian ethic, in spite of our failures and our sins, is our standard of reference. We don't have to apologize for upholding honor and truth and purity, nor for insisting that only on good will and righteousness and justice can a nation be built securely. The divorce evil is appalling, but no decent people dissent from the fundamental Christian faith concerning the sanctity of marriage and the place of the family in national life.

The moral of all this is plain. If the vast and awful tasks of the next generation are to be met with courage and with vision, if we are to go forward with increasing cooperation among the nations, strengthening the United Nations Organization, raising the dignity of man which means raising his standard of living, spreading the faith of democracy through the world, for us in America the job begins in Central Square.

The churches (the complacent middle and upper class congregations) cannot escape their responsibility. Keepers of the conscience of America, witnesses to its dictates, they must break from their fenced oases. They must step into Central Square and take a hand. All the churches as well as all the universities must join America.

E. L. P.

Editorial Notes

We are glad to publish the article by Mr. Richard Fagley concerning the atomic bomb. Mr. Fagley, who is one of the secretaries of the Federal Council's Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, has been thinking and acting very effectively to arouse the Churches to face the problem of the future control of atomic power. His summary of the reasons why this is the favorable time to discover some method of international control of this new power are very cogent. Doubtless there are risks in spreading this secret knowledge beyond those who now possess it; but the risk of attempting to keep this power as an Anglo-Saxon monopoly is much greater. Such an attempt would fail in a few years in any case. But apart from that, it would store up against us great resentment. It would involve such a serious bypassing of the United Nations that the new organization might no longer be taken seriously. It would stimulate at the outset a mad race between nations to perfect this weapon as a purely national possession.

One of the most dangerous features of the atomic bomb is that it makes it much easier to prepare for war in secret. A test of any international organization will be its capacity to keep all parts of the world open to inspection to prevent such preparations from being hidden. At once the almost insuperable difficulties of this are apparent. But nothing else will give nations anywhere the least sense of security. Without this we will all live in fear of sneak attacks and preventive wars. Eventually we must face the fact that even minorities within nations or unscrupulous international cliques may be able to gain control of enough of this power to blackmail great nations.

There has been some argument concerning the importance of fear as compared with faith or love in preventing disaster of this kind. Those who rely chiefly on fear are plainly mistaken as the propaganda between the wars concerning the increasing horror of war makes evident. When fear of catastrophe is one factor in the situation it forces men to consider a change of their ways; it does not give them the power to change their ways. Not fear of what potential enemies may do to us but solidarity with those other peoples whom we are tempted to fear must be our primary motive. Not a fatalism that assumes that we in our wisdom, have thought through all of the possibilities and see only doom ahead for humanity, but the faith that the power of God is mightier than all the forces that suggest this doom should be our guide. There are some lines of Soren Kierkegaard addressed to despairing individuals but they are true for nations as well: "Inasmuch as for God all things are possible, it may be said that this is what God is, viz. one for whom all things are pos-The worship of the fatalist is therefore at its maximum an exclamation, and essentially it is dumbness, dumb submission, he is unable to pray. So to pray is to breathe, and possibility is for the self what oxygen is for breathing." The Christian lives in full view of the threat of the divine judgment but he knows that this judgment is conditional, that it is not a fate before which men are helpless and he knows that the love of God is at work in surprising ways to lead men to a new possibility of good. Fear is healthy when it is in company with love and faith.

J. C. B.

The Fate of Europe

BARBARA WARD

YOU have asked me to write about Europe. These notes are hurried jottings made after a second visit to Europe since the spring. They are not well digested. They are not documented and I fear that they are exceedingly superficial. Unhappily my work is so arranged at the moment that there is far too little time for proper reflection on the raw material presented by reading, talking and travelling.

In the last few months I have been to France and Belgium, with a brief visit to Holland and an even briefer journey into Germany. All these countries belong, as we ourselves belong, to a specific cultural entity, a community formed by western civilization. This civilization has been for over a thousand years the dominant element in world history, and in it the highest expressions of human activity have so far

been achieved.

Yet the question is whether this community can recover from the dreadful attacks that have deeply and savagely stricken Europe. All that the war has decided is that National Socialism shall not completely blot out western civilization. But Nazism grew up inside this civilization and therefore is a symptom of a deeper disease. The operation of removing this cancer may have been final and successful, but all one can say after these first months of victory is that it is difficult to believe that the opera-

tion will restore the patient's health.

Materially, politically, spiritually, Europe today is a center of confusion and contradiction. Material destruction has not gone as far in France, the Low Countries or Italy as might have been feared. Holland in particular escaped almost complete destruction by a matter of days. In Germany, on the other hand, destruction has been wrought on a scale at which the mind boggles. The great cities are now tombs, vast ruins covering the dead. The destruction of wealth has gone on everywhere. One cannot devote resources to total war for six years without the most decisive fall in the people's standards of living. Since among the poorest there is almost no margin, a fallen standard of living means near starvation. Disruption of transport, lack of raw materials, above all the coal crisis have led to wide unemployment, malnutrition and general misery. Idleness increases the sense of frustration and futility, which is felt all the more keenly in contrast to the earlier Utopian hopes of liberation.

I cannot in a few sentences sum up the terrible feeling of tension and desolation and even hopelessness which one meets in liberated countries. One feels a sort of spiritual vacuum. Behind it all is lurking the fear of slaughter, violence and appalling cruelty. I do not mean that we shall see a repetition of Buchenwald and Belsen, but I do mean that Nazi

horrors have removed certain psychological restraints, and people now contemplete torture and mass execution in quite a different way than they did, say ten to fifteen years ago. There is a hardening and brutalizing of people's minds. One typical example is the continuance in certain circles of anti-Semitism, and the really astonishing speed with which the massacre of over three million Jews has either been dismisssed from people's minds or genuinely forgotten. I do not want to be defeatist, but I cannot honestly say that visits to Europe at the moment are very encouraging. One should not expect clear thoughts in a man who has just passed through a crisis in some fever. European civilization is for the moment moribund, and many people are wondering whether it has the people, organization and energy inside itself to begin its gigantic task of rebuilding itself as a coherent society. Yet it would be impossible to leave a vacuum in Europe. There are two principles of political, social and economic organization which will penetrate into Europe if it remains in this inert state. The trouble is that either alternative may well complete the destruction of Europe which Hitler had already very nearly accomplished.

The first principle is the Russian principle. Certain of its concepts are rational and some of its achievements impressive. It is my own firm conviction that the idea of economic planning of a single wide area and single range of resources is essential to the rebuilding of Europe. I think, too, that the relative absence of racialism in Russia might spare Europe some of its endless national friction and bloodshed. In every other way the Russian system—in which a tradition of Byzantine autocracy has been wedded to a sort of managerial revolution with State bureaucracy and a most ubiquitous secret police—cannot be held to be anything but a total denial of the human and liberal tradition which is the crown

of Europe.

The other principle of organization is the American principle. It manifests the virtues of laissez faire politics and carries on within it some part of the inheritance of freedom and constitutionalism from its Founding Fathers. But economically it is a profoundly unstable system, in spite of its brilliant technical achievements. It has not mastered the trade cycle. It is liable to shattering crises of unemployment. Many of its industrial leaders already seem to look upon Europe as an area for colonial exploitation or a dumping ground for exports. Above all, it has in no way solved the spiritual crisis of capitalism—that of healing the breach between employers and employed and of giving an acceptable social sanction to the wielders of economic power.

One does not have to stay long in Europe to see

that people feel a growing terror of being divided between these two systems and becoming their battleground. Such a development would complete the destruction of Europe, and no one can doubt that if the vacuum in Europe persists some such conflict will be inevitable. After being the fount of civilization for a thousand years, Europe will become a no-man'sland between two rival but equally pagan conceptions

The only way out is the recovery of Europe itself by a genuine synthesis between the Russian and American extremes. Some people see this alternative in terms of a return to the past. They argue that both the Russian and American systems come from the secular movements in Europe-from the Enlightenment and the Revolution of 1789, and from the Industrial Revolution. These are the ideas and movements, they argue, that have betrayed Europe, and Europe will recover only by regaining its historical past. The medievalists, the unconscious feudalists, the "reactionaries" -in the proper and technical sense of the term-wish to renounce post-Reformation Europe. For Christians, and particularly for Catholics, this possibility is an obvious temptation. It provided some of the honest support that was given to Pétain, and it is obviously a vital trend in Spain. It occurs, too, in Conservative circles everywhere, in the hankering for simpler ways of life, for the return of the aristocratic principle, the restoration of status, the cult of honor.

I do not myself think that there is any way out here. The salvation of Europe can never lie in defeatism and in the renunciation of reality. Several times in human history, the attempt to plunge back into the past has led to ossification and collapse. In any case an attempt to recreate a vanished world could not counter aggressive Russian and American ideas.

To my mind the only solution lies in an attempt to recreate the tradition of western civilization by absorbing into it all that has been good in the last 600 years, and by expressing in terms suitable for a scientific and technical civilization, the eternal values which were formerly expressed in the old feudal agrarian world. There are two sides to this attempted synthesis. One is in the political and economic field, and lies in the achievement of an organization in which the necessary direction and intervention of the State in economic life is reconciled to freedom and spontaneity in political and social life. The other task—which may well be a pre-condition of success on the political and economic field —is the achievement of a new religious synthesis.

On the political and economic level it is obvious that Great Britain has an enormous part to play. It is in England that political freedom and the supremacy of society over the State have been best preserved. It is in England that the first attempts are being made to work out the compromise between

complete socialism and complete laissez faire. The empiricism and the tolerance of the British people, and their political maturity, give them an opportunity and therefore a responsibility such as rests on no

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The more fundamental problem—the new religious approach—is the responsibility of the whole Christian community, and to me it seems two-fold. There is an intellectual problem which resembles the task faced by St. Paul when he confronted the Greek philosophy with Hebrew religion, or St. Thomas Aguinas when he reconciled classical learning with scholastic philosophy. Our task of assimilation today is a far more difficult one, for so much of the thinking has been directly destructive of the religious view of life. This view can, I think, be best summed up in the words of a recent advertisement for a new magazine "which will assume that separately during the last fifty years there have been four revolutionary developments which are significant for the future of human thought and behavior. (1) The discovery of the unconscious by Freud. (2) The tendency of philosophy, as a subject, to develop into a science of verbal meaning (sematic symbolism, logical positivism). (3) The trend in the arts away from representation towards expression and construction. (4) The evolution of Marxism as the faith of tens of millions of people in Europe and Asia."

The intellectual task of sorting out truth and error in these developments and restoring the truth to the Christian tradition is a colossal one. I know of only two places where such an attempt is being made—in the writing of Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, and in the leftwing Catholic circles in France, where the Dominican Fathers are doing remarkable work. Secular writers such as Aldous Huxley and Gerald Heard have an inkling of the need, and one of the most remarkable contributions that I have read recently is the last essay in Arthur Koestler's The Yogi and the Commissar, in which he links together scientific discovery and thought with an attempt to recover ethical values. This effort is necessary if the truth in Marxism, psycho-analysis, in the scientific approach, are to be re-integrated into Christian philosophy.

The other task for the Christian world is not of the same order but is definitely more important. It is the way of sanctity. In our modern skeptical, materialistic world, the people can again be made to believe in God only, I think, if they meet men and women who are, in the old Russian term, "God-bearers." The irruption of the divine into human life is the only final proof of God, and through it only will be restored belief in religion and the primacy of spiritual values. It is the only final answer to Belsen and Buchenwald. When European man has fallen as low as the German butchers, how can the balance be redressed without an outpouring of sanctity and the appearance of men who are as near the angels as Himmler and Kramer were near the beasts?

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The Atomic Bomb and the Crisis of Man

RICHARD M. FAGLEY

If there was any doubt that beneath the crisis of the Second World War lay a more profound crisis of man, the explosions in New Mexico, Hiroshima and Nagasaki should have shattered the illusion. The fact that the illusion widely persists reveals the depth of our present, and possibly final, crisis.

Through the sacrifices of young men and scientific discovery, our secularized society survived the crisis of Hitler's pagan conspiracy. The faith of modern man in his own self-sufficiency unfortunately also survived, weakened perhaps but not broken. Consequently, the end of one crisis becomes, with the discovery of atomic power, the beginning of a far greater crisis. From this crisis there is no escape by the ways familiar to secularism or worldliness. The inexorable "either-or" of the atomic bomb, upon which hangs the fate of life on this planet, leaves the pride of man no means by which to save itself. The only alternative to Armageddon is repentence and regeneration.

One tragic reflection of the present crisis is the picture, conjured up by some of our writers, of vast power and plenty made possible by atomic energy. The Promised Land of freedom from want lies just ahead. Man has made the power of the sun his servant, and freed himself for luxury and leisure. How distorted is our vision to see so easily the vista of mechancial progress in this Atomic Age, and to fail to see clearly the greed, pride and fear in ourselves which have now brought us to the doorstep of doom! Of course, atomic energy can lift the burden of poverty from the backs of countless millions and give all mankind the material basis for creative living. What should be equally obvious is that only if man has a new spirit within him can he pass over into this Promised Land. The Atomic Age is otherwise almost certain to be extremely short and extremely brutish!

Equally revealing is the naive faith of many in the ability of science to control the threat of atomic bombs by creating effective counter-weapons. The end of a scientific race between the development of anti-bombs and the development of bigger, faster bombs is not hard to see. It is the end of man on this earth. Not machines but man with God's help can control the power God has permitted man to discover.

Again, there is the common illusion that fear can protect mankind from atomic war. Fear, it is true, may help—if it leads men to seek, with a contrite heart, the protection and guidance of God. But fear by itself offers a shortcut to catastrophe. The fear of destruction from atomic bombs in the present

world of competing states would insure and hasten sudden, ruthless attacks with atomic bombs. Total aggression would become the strategy for survival. As Norman Cousins writes: "If history teaches us anything, it is that the possibility of war increases in direct proportion to the effectiveness of the instruments of war."

Of a piece with the above patterns of thought is the notion that the present crisis might be exorcised, if only the inventors would destroy their infernal machine, or if they would discontinue the manufacture of bombs, while the nations signed a pledge not to use them. For better or worse, however, the clock of history does not run backwards. Nor can its cosmic hands be stayed by Kellogg-Briand pacts. Atomic power is here to stay for the remainder of human history. And unless man can control himself as well as atomic power according to the moral law, both will no doubt terminate within a comparatively few years.

The argument for world government as a way to control the perils and potentialities of atomic energy is logical in detail. But its fundamental premise, that changes in political institutions by themselves would assure human survival, is false like the rest of the secularist arguments. No form of government is foolproof. No system of international control can provide a final answer. Political institutions can be corrupted. Controls can break down.

This does not mean that the form of institution or the differences among types of political controls are unimportant. Far from it. Yet twist and turn as we may, we cannot escape from this crisis by secularist means. We are driven inexorably from one false solution to another, unless and until we seek a more profound, religious solution. A deeper faith in God and therefore in man as a child of God and a more sacrificial effort to make brotherhood a guiding principle of society, alone offer real hope that atomic rockets can be kept under control, and the new energy be put to the service of human needs. Unless men everywhere are moved to confess their own inadequacy, and seek to follow God's will rather than their own, no other strategy can save mankind.

The fate of the world, therefore, in a literal sense, depends upon the ability of the moral and religious forces, and above all, of the Christian churches, to call men effectively to repentance, worship, and service. The conversion of man, who, as Cousins puts it, "has exalted change in everything but himself," has suddenly become a life-and-death issue, not merely for individuals, but for the race. Beyond all other groups, our churches are confronted with the ultimatum of the atomic bomb, for they alone can provide a significant answer.

The chief expedient deserving, or rather demanding, immediate attention is the establishment of international controls over all atomic power which can be used in bombs. It seems absolutely clear that the menace of atomic war would become acute, if control of the bomb slipped from sole possession by the United States into the hands of two or more competing states. If that happened, and indeed it is the probable and expected development, the need to combine these separate controls into one mutual control would be desperate. Yet the very factors which made the need so tremendous—the overwhelming fear and suspicion, and the equally overwhelming tendency to attack in the hope of survival—would make international control extremely difficult if not impossible to achieve.

If international control alone offers some hope of preventing catastrophe at least temporarily (and perhaps permanently, given a new spirit in man), then the one favorable time to achieve such control is now. The reasons seem obvious. Now the initial and probably crucial decision is in the hands of one state, the United States, rather than in the hands of two or more states. Now the United States has preponderant bargaining power, because of its temporary monopoly, to secure the type of international control most favorable to its own security as well as to the security of the rest of the world. Now, at the climax of a coalition victory before the spirit of cooperation has been broken by a new race for atomic armaments, is the psychological moment for agreement. Now is when the United Nations oganization, untarnished by neglect, misuse or failure, offers a promising control mechanism. Every month the decision is delayed dims the prospects for success. As fear and suspicion, frantic research and intense secret preparations mount, the difficulties of achieving agreement would mount far higher.

Of course, even American initiative—and no other country can take the initiative-might not succeed. The United States could not yield its monopoly to the United Nations without securing in return the maximum guarantees possible that no other nation would acquire the power to manufacture atomic energy separately. These would no doubt require international manufacture in one form or other, effective international inspection of all industrial and laboratory facilities, pooling of atomic research and experimental equipment, perhaps international control of essential raw materials. One or more states might object to such an agreement, though this does not seem likely, at least for some months to come. Unless the United States takes the lead, however, there is no hope at all for international controls.

It is neither fitting nor expedient for Christian churches to advocate detailed technical methods of control. We do not know the manufacturing process, we are not experts in government, and we are too weak to permit divided counsels about secondary is-

sues. The main thing to stress is the need to provide the maximum possible assurance that no one nation or bloc of nations could use atomic weapons as instruments of national policy. The United Nations should be emphasized as the overall agency of control, to reinforce the constructive work agreed upon at San Francisco, so important as a means to a new fellowship among peoples.

Our efforts should deal with the concrete issues of international control and national safety, not with speculative abstractions like "world government." To be sure, genuine international control over the most destructive and constructive energy yet known would have profound repercussions on international relationships. But we have neither the strength not time to squander on what might or might not be built on international atomic control, particularly when such speculation would divide the forces of world order and provide new arguments to its opponents. We dare not be anything but intensely practical.

The relatively favorable time for action is pitifully short and all of us woefully unprepared. Let us, therefore, in our weakness and ignorance seek God's strength and light. Let us in our churches and in our homes seek, in all humility, His guidance for our world, our nation, our churches and ourselves in this fateful time. Spiritual power alone can cope with atomic power.

Tragedy in Eastern Europe

A letter from a reliable correspondent in Berlin tells about some of the human consequences of the displacement of populations in the Eastern provinces recently detached from Germany. Here are a few extracts: "... The need that confronts us daily during office hours and on every street of Germany is beyond verbal description. I know the sufferings of the Jews. I shared the tortures of the Concentration Camps, but what happens now right in front of our eyes surpasses in form and in extent everything that has happened thus far. I think of the people who in their despair take their own lives. Thousands of bodies are hanging from the trees in the woods around Berlin and nobody bothers to cut them down. Thousands of corpses are carried into the sea by the ODER and the ELBE; one doesn't notice it any longer. Thousands and tens of thousands have not known where they would ever find again a place they could call home. Thousands are separated from their loved ones. Children roam the highways alone, their parents shot, dead-lost. . . ."

We quote two of the case histories contained in the letter: "Mrs. Sch., wife of a minister, driven from X in East Prussia on August 2, 1944. Since that time she has been on the highway with her four children, ages seven, six, three, and two years. The farmers in the villages through which she has passed do not want her. Because of her four children she cannot do enough work. Since nobody is allowed to enter Berlin, and she entered illegally, she is unable to obtain food-ration cards for herself or her children. She left her temporary refuge early in the morning. Since yesterday

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her children have not had anything to eat. When they waken they cry from hunger. She says she can't bear to listen to them any longer. I cannot give anything to her, since we ourselves have not received any bread for a day and a half. She asks whether someone would care for her children. if she left them. Then they would be orphans, she reasoned, and would have to be

taken care of in an orphanage. She said that that would be the hardest step in her life—but for her children she would do it."

"H. reports that of a group of about 2,400 people fleeing from T. to G. about 1,000 died on the way. For the survivors there is no refuge. They do not know where to turn. . . ."

The World Church: News and Notes

German Protestantism in Revolutionary Reversal of Policy

Emphasis on theology to the exclusion of other issues has been abandoned by German Protestantism in a revolutionary reversal of policy that is expected to unite the churches more closely than ever before through a

new program of social action.

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Dr. Hans Schoenfeld of the World Council of Churches announced this trend following his return to Geneva from the Frankfurt and Treysa conferences of German church leaders. He said a new "Evangelical Church of Germany" was formed at Treysa as distinguished from the old "German Evangelical Church," which, it was felt, was too closely related to the Nazi church order.

Going beyond federation but stopping short of amalgamation the new body includes Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches—in fact all but the Free churches. Its formation, Dr. Schoenfeld said, indicates German churchmen want nothing to do with the church constitution of the Nazis, nor a return to the loose pre-Hitler federation.

"Realization of their social task has broken through suddenly," Dr. Schoenfeld declared. "While they were primarily occupied with theological questions before, they now recognize their responsibility for the social

and political structure."

The new policy is especially supported by the Rev. Martin Niemoeller, he said. Preceding the Treysa conference, Niemoeller called a meeting at Frankfurt of the confessional churches' Brotherhood Synods, a session many felt ranked second in importance only to the Barmen Synod of 1936.

Surprising many, Niemoeller seemed to have swung to the other extreme from his former theological position, and stressed that there is a close relationship between genuine Christianity and genuine democracy

which the German must recognize.

A Provisional Council of twelve members was named to direct activities of the new church organization, with Bishop Theophilus Wurm of Wurttemberg as chairman

and Niemoeller as vice-chairman.

Niemoeller, who may be given the title of bishop, will head the Church's ecumenical office, with Pastor Asmussen in charge of the central administration. Headquarters will be established at Stuttgart.

Dr. Schoenfeld declared that the new position of the Church represents a clear break from the nationalism

of the Junkers and industrialists.

More than 100 clergymen attended the Treysa conference, at which a statement was presented from Dr. Sylvester C. Michaelfelder, representative of the American Section of the Lutheran World Convention, ex-

pressing a desire to rebuild friendly relations with the German Church.

Those present at Treysa included ten pastors from the Russian zone of occupation. These were told by high Soviet officials that they were free to attend the sessions, but difficulties were encountered. One had to steal through the Russian lines, was shot at, and when he got through was sent back by the Americans, then had to elude U. S. troops to reach the gathering. R. N. S.

Niemoeller Gives Views on Future of German Church

The task of contacting churches abroad has been entrusted to Pastor Martin Niemoeller in his capacity as vice chairman of the 12-man Provisional Council named to direct activities of the new Evangelical Church of Germany.

Pastor Niemoeller, in an interview, warned that difficulties in deciding the Church's policies may be expected, in view of the fact that the council, headed by Bishop Theophilus Wurm, of Wurttemberg, must function on a temporary basis until a permanent council is elected.

It will also be necessary, he pointed out, to reconcile conflicting viewpoints among Evangelical "traditionalits" and leaders of the young Confessional church group.

He said the new spirit of the Confessional churches, as demonstrated at the Treysa conference, is aimed at a stronger church influence in political life, as in England and the United States, where the church "acts as the conscience of the state."

The German pastor came out openly in favor of a democratic form of government in Germany as opposed to totalitarianism. He said:

"A government which guarantees liberties and fundamental rights is better than one which does not. Nor is this a matter of indifference for the church."

He added, however, that it will be difficult for the German people soon to achieve this goal. He said they must wait "until the old politicians die" and meanwhile must learn democracy gradually, beginning with administrative tasks.

"The program of the church," Pastor Niemoeller stated, "is to enter the schools, to rebuild youth organizations, and influence the universities. Sermons must express the church's broad responsibilities in political and economic life."

Declaring he had "no hesitation in speaking to my Christian brethren abroad just as to German Christians," Pastor Niemoeller called on churches throughout the world to help prevent the threatened reduction of Germany's population by starvation during the coming winter.

R. N. S.

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Niemoeller Says He Sought Overthrow of Hitler

Pastor Niemoeller, Confessional church leader, has denied charges made abroad that his attempt to enlist in the German Navy while a prisoner of the Nazis was inspired by loyalty to the Hitler regime.

He stated that he had believed, while in prison, that the only way to serve Germany was to overthrow Hitler. For that reason, he said, he wanted to get free so he could take part in the plot against the Fuehrer which he believed was being engineered by German military officers and others.

"None of my friends," Niemoeller stated, "understand the press campaign against me, as they all know what my motivation was."

Niemoeller admitted, however, that criticism of the traditional Lutheran teaching concerning the supreme authority of the state was justified.

"I was raised a Lutheran and did not realize that the traditional Lutheran theology regarding the state was wrong," he said, "until recently during a conference of Confessional church leaders at Treysa.

"This was, for me, a most interesting discovery. I believe Lutheran teaching can be changed on this point. Lutherans can learn, and they must choose democracy as the best form of government."

R. N. S.

British Churchmen Ask Aid To Suffering Germans

The Anglican Bishop of Chichester, Dr. G. K. A. Bell and other church leaders, have signed an appeal to the British people to accept reduced food rations if necessary to save suffering war victims in Europe.

"Correspondents in Berlin," the appeal said, "have been sending descriptions of the conditions in that city, which must have been read by many with grave disquiet.

"Expelled from their homes in Sudetenland, East

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Prussia, and a vast region of Germany taken over by the Poles, sometimes at thirty minutes notice, and without provision of food or transport, a horde of Germans are struggling daily into Berlin and being turned away because there is no food for them.

"The majority are old men, women and children. Some too weak to wander further have been seen under the bomb-wrecked roof of Stettiner railway station, dead or dying.

"If we call attention to this vast tragedy, it is certainly not because we fail to realize how grievously our Allies are suffering, nor because we would wish any preference to be given to former enemy nationals. Nothing is more urgent than the speedy relief of Europe as a whole.

"We are profoundly troubled by the possibility of mass starvation that cannot be prevented without some cut in our own rations and that the authorities may hesitate to ask us, after six years of war, to make this sacrifice, and also by fear that amidst so much misery, the actual death by hunger of a German national may be disregarded.

"We do not think the government need feel such hesitation. It is not in accordance with traditions of this country to allow children, even of ex-enemies, to starve. We have reason to believe numbers of fellow-countrymen would be willing to make some voluntary sacrifice in this cause."

R. N. S.

Nazis Turning to Religion In Large Numbers

Adolf Hitler's supermen are turning to religion, seeking consolation and aid in their desperation and disappointment, it was disclosed by Evangelical Bishop Hans Meiser.

"Reports from prison and labor camps are astounding," the bishop said. "Imprisoned Nazis attend divine services by the thousands. In one camp S. S. men collected 11,000 marks for orphans. They eagerly participate in the Sacrament. Recently I received wine and 10,000 pieces of bread from the military government for one and one-half million prisoners. It will not be sufficient."

Explaining why the Nazis are embracing religion, Bishop Meiser said: "These men have been accustomed to the best of everything under the Hitler regime. They were Hitler's pampered darlings. In exchange for their loyalty to him, Hitler gave them much and promised them more. They soon became accustomed to unbounded faith in the Fuhrer. Now they have nothing but barbed wire fences and hard labor.

"The result is they turn to Christ like drowning men reaching for a straw. They have been deserted by everyone and everything except the Church."

R. N. S.

Authors in This Issue

Barbara Ward is an Editor of The Economist (London) and one of the most thoughtful Christian laywomen in the Anglo-Saxon World. We reprint this article from The Christian News Letter at the latter's suggestion.

Richard M. Fagley is Secretary of The Commission on a Just and Durable Peace.

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